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**Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

**Security Council**
**Sixty-sixth year**

## Identical letters dated 8 August 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am compelled to bring to your attention the escalating tensions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as a result of Israel's illegal policies and practices of military aggression and colonization and its continuous provocations and incitement against the Palestinian people. In this regard, the situation on the ground continues to remain highly volatile and unsustainable and requires urgent redress by the international community so as to bring a halt to the massive violations that continue to be perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people.

Instead of advancing peace, Israel, the occupying Power, has chosen to do the exact opposite by intensifying its violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In this connection, as the Palestinian people observe the holy month of Ramadan, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued to employ indiscriminate and disproportionate force, causing death and injury to civilians, including women and children. One such incident that illustrates the utter disregard for Palestinian life took place just before dawn prayers on 1 August 2011, the first day of Ramadan, in which Israeli occupying forces raided the Qalandiya refugee camp, in the West Bank, killing two young men. The two young men, Mu'tasim Odwan, 22 years old, and Mohammed Ali Khalifa, 23 years old, were shot in the head and stomach, respectively, and died instantly. Scores of Palestinian civilians were also injured and many were rounded up and illegally detained during the same ferocious military raid.

Moreover, the Palestinian people in the besieged Gaza Strip have not been spared the wrath of the occupying Power as it continues to commit acts of military aggression against the more than 1.5 million inhabitants living there. Over the past week, Israeli occupying forces launched multiple air strikes against the Gaza Strip, including an air strike targeting a group of fishermen on the shores of Rafah. The air strikes resulted in the injury of scores of Palestinians and caused extensive material

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damage to homes and properties. It must be recalled that military attacks against civilian areas, such as these latest crimes by the occupying Power, are unlawful under international humanitarian law and constitute grave acts of terror, provocation and incitement against the Palestinian people. In addition to being punished by the incessant military aggression against them, the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip continues to be collectively punished by the occupying Power's illegitimate blockade which continues to deepen poverty and despair in Gaza. The Palestinian leadership appeals to the international community to call on Israel to cease its military attacks against the Gaza Strip and to abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law and to cease forthwith all attacks against the Palestinian civilian population and its collective punishment, including by fully lifting the blockade.

At the same time, Israel has been unrelenting in its illegal drive to colonize the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in its ongoing illegal attempts to change the reality on the ground in Occupied East Jerusalem through settlement expansion, home demolitions, evictions and the displacement of hundreds of Palestinians. In the latest illegal, reckless and provocative declaration, which came on Thursday, 4 August 2011, the Israeli government announced the approval given to building 900 more settlement units in the so-called settlement of "Har Homa" located in Jabal Abu Ghneim in Occupied East Jerusalem. In addition to making the recent provocative declaration of the intention to construct more illegal settlement units in Occupied East Jerusalem, the Israeli occupying forces have in recent days carried out the destruction of more Palestinian property and land. These illegal actions once again confirm Israel's deliberate intent to defy international law and the unequivocal calls of the international community for the immediate and full cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In this regard, we regret to reiterate that continued international inaction has clearly emboldened Israel in its defiance and intransigence.

Hand in hand with its increased settlement activity is the rise in home demolitions and displacement of Palestinian civilians by the occupying Power. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs released a report last week documenting alarming trends in the forced displacement of Palestinians and stated that more home demolitions have taken place so far in 2011 than in all of 2009 and 2010 combined. More specifically, the report stated that 342 Palestinian-owned structures had been demolished by the occupying Power in the first half of 2011; and 656 people, including 351 children, lost their homes in the first half of 2011, almost five times more than within the same period last year. Shockingly, there are currently over 3,000 demolition orders outstanding, including 18 targeting schools. We thus call on the international community to condemn the destruction of Palestinian homes and the subsequent displacement of entire families and to take the necessary actions to compel the occupying Power to halt this ruthless and cruel practice.

Moreover, I regret to inform you that Israeli settler-related terror, violence, harassment and intimidation against the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, have intensified. Despicable and destructive acts against Palestinian civilians and their properties have continued unabated, including four separate incidents last week, in which settlers set fire to Palestinian agricultural property in the villages of Turmusayya,

Burin and Awarta in the West Bank, damaging about 400 olive and almond trees. Settlers even attacked the Palestinian fire brigade as it was attempting to extinguish the fires. Reports have also indicated that a shocking 4,000 or more trees belonging to Palestinians have been uprooted, burned or otherwise vandalized by settlers since the beginning of the year. Additionally, in two separate incidents in Hebron, settlers from the so-called settlement outpost called "Havat Ma'on" attacked and injured five international activists, who were escorting children from a summer camp in a nearby village and assisting Palestinian shepherds in accessing their land.

We are clearly at a critical juncture and the international community, including the Security Council, must rise to the challenge of upholding its responsibilities in respect of bringing Israel into compliance with its obligations as an occupying Power. Therefore, the international community must not allow Israel, the occupying Power, to perpetrate, with total impunity and without accountability, military attacks, the killing and injury of innocent civilians, the destruction of homes and property, the colonization of the Palestinian land, collective punishment, and the arbitrary imprisonment and detention of Palestinian civilians. We firmly believe that only serious coordinated action can compel Israel, the occupying Power, to cease forthwith all its illegal activities and thereby prevent this volatile situation from further escalation.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 397 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 20 July 2011 (A/ES-10/525-S/2011/445), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations